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Observations of *Aprasia repens* on Rottnest Island – Worm lizards in the genus *Aprasia* are predominantly fossorial and their ecology is not well understood (Storr *et al.* 1990; Webb and Shine 1994; Cogger 2000). Existing information has largely been deduced from dissection of museum specimens (Webb and Shine 1994). Opportunistic observations of the behaviour of live specimens are therefore particularly valuable in supplementing the museum data.

On 14 April 2003 I unearthed two separate pairs of the South-western Sandplain Worm Lizard *Aprasia repens*, while collecting soil samples at Radar Reef, Rottnest Island (0354463 E, 6455883 N). Remarkably the two unearthings came from only five localised instances of soil sampling.

Both pairs were located within 30 mm of the soil surface in a dense mat of roots and were associated with the underground burrow systems and nests of the ant *Camponotus* sp. The surface vegetation was dominated by *Olearia axillaris*, *Westringia dampiera*, and *Acanthocarpus preissii*. These observations support previous findings that *A. repens* frequent root mats (Cogger 2000), and that they forage predominantly on ant larvae and pupae (greater than 95% of gut contents: Webb and Shine 1994).

Each of the Rottnest Island pairs comprised one larger (approximately 110 mm) and one smaller (approximately 90 mm) individual in close proximity (10–30 mm). A study by Patchell and Shine (1986) measured *A. repens* specimens from the Sydney Museum and found mean snout-vent lengths (SVL) of were 83.7 mm for males and 108.0 mm for females. Similarly, for Western Australian and South Australian specimens, Webb and Shine (1994) reported mean SVL of 89.9 mm and 107.8 mm for male and female *A. repens*, respectively. It is likely that each of the Rottnest Island pairs comprised a male and female animal.

While the timing of copulation and fertilisation has not been recorded for *A. repens*, Webb and Shine (1994) noted that females were gravid during November and December, and males had enlarged testes from August to November. It is probable that *A. repens* oviposits immediately after a spring mating. If my observations represent reproductive pairs, then

perhaps *A. repens* stay paired following such a mating.

Monogamy has been recorded in several species of reptiles, and is more commonly short-term (hours to days; Bull 2000). In the Australian Sleepy Lizard *Tiliqua rugosa*, however, monogamous pairs form for six to eight weeks prior to mating, although the partners separate immediately following the mating (Bull 2000). My observations of *A. repens* pairs, at a time that is probably several months post-mating, are anomalous. Further investigation will be required to determine whether the reproductive ecology of *A. repens* is a unique case, or whether my observations were simply chance events.

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Buff-banded Rail breeding at Pelican Point – On Saturday 30 August 2003 I found a single, broken Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* egg-shell, in the Pelican Point Nature Reserve, Crawley. This finding is the first proof of these birds breeding at Pelican Point. The egg-shell was found under a clump of Sea-rush *Juncus kraussii*, about 15 m from the nearest edge of the estuarine ponds. Although about one quarter of the eggshell was missing, the patterning was clear and I was able to measure its dimensions (c. 37 mm x 25 mm) to allow positive identification of the egg (Johnstone and Storr 1998).

The location of the egg was consistent with what is known of the breeding biology of Buff-banded Rail. The species prefers to nest among long grass, rushes, reeds or sedges in saltmarshes, usually near water, and laying commences in August or September in southern Australia (Marchant and Higgins 1993). Buff-banded Rail have been recorded breeding in similar habitat elsewhere on the Swan Coastal Plain (e.g. Bibra Lake, Lake Gwelup, BAWA 2003).

The Pelican Point Reserve has been surveyed on a weekly basis during summer since at least 1972, and on a weekly basis all year around for the last three years, yet Buff-banded Rail have not been recorded breeding at the site